

# Module 24 – The Role of the Home Care Aide in Medication Administration

## Introduction

Many of the individuals you see in the home will be on medications. It is vital that the home care aide understand some of the reasons why someone would take medications, side effects to report and most importantly the role of the home care aide in medication administration.

## Objectives

At the end of the module, the nurse aide will be able to:

1. Identify unique medication requirements of home care patients
2. Explain some physiological issues associated with home care patients and medications
3. Recognize possible major side effects of medications
4. Explain the home care aide's role in medication administration

## Instructional Resource Materials

- Power Point for Module 24 – The Role of the Home Care Aide in Medication Administration
- Handout/Activities

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Slides	Instructor's Script	Notes
<b>Slide 1</b> Title Slide	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Module 24 – The Role of the Home Care Aide in Medication Administration</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 2</b>	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Objectives</b> - At the end of the module, the nurse aide will be able to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify unique medication requirements of home care patients</li> <li>2. Explain some physiological issues associated with home care patients and medications</li> <li>3. Recognize possible major side effects of medications</li> <li>4. Explain the home care aide's role in medication administration</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 3</b>	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many of the home care aide's patients will be older adults with one or more medical issues.</li> <li>• It is important to understand that older adult patients will have unique medication requirements, and risk factors, for several reasons:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Older adults will take more medications, which could lead to a greater risk of complications.</li> <li>○ Also, with more medications come more and/or adverse side effects. Likewise, the older adult has a decreased reserved capacity for dealing with stress and/or side effects of medications.</li> <li>○ Older patients are also more prone to a backward or opposite reaction to their medications. For example, a sedative could make the patient more agitated and confused.</li> <li>○ Physiological changes may cause less drug to be excreted from the body. This could have a serious effect in a matter of days or weeks; or, could become chronic and occur in weeks to months. The longer a patient suffers from this, the more likely he/she will show signs of changed mental function.</li> <li>○ A patient may have an ineffective or poor relationship with the medical community or his/her doctor. The patient's doctor did not take the time to teach the patient about his/her medication, or the patient does not feel comfortable asking questions or voicing concerns.</li> <li>○ Allergies to medications could be an issue as well. It is important to write down all the patient's allergies,</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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	including what symptoms the patient exhibited or experienced when exposed to the medicine.	
<b>Slide 4</b>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As well as the physiological change of kidneys being less effective as one ages, there are other important physiological changes to be aware of with older patients.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Decreased efficiency of the heart – more blood is sent to the heart and brain, and less could be sent to liver and kidneys where medications are absorbed.</li> <li>○ There is less water in the body of an older adult; therefore, medication is more concentrated.</li> <li>○ Percentage of fat to lean tissue is increased. This could be an issue because many drugs accumulate in the fat.</li> <li>○ At an advanced age, medications enter the central nervous system more easily.</li> <li>○ Medications are metabolized slower in the older adult.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 5</b>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home care aides will help their patients in several ways; however, with regards to medication assistance they are limited in what they can do for their patients.</li> <li>• <b>Handout #1 – NC Board of Nursing Guide for Assisting Patients with Self-Administration of Medications.</b></li> <li>• Faculty – go over list with students. Be sure to review each item on the list.</li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 6</b>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Even without being able to give medications or fill pill boxes, there are activities that a home care aide can do to help a patient who is taking medications:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Help the patient create a drug history of all medications prescribed in the past; include why medication was started and/or stopped. Review the list with the patient if his/her medication changes. Have the nurse review the list as well.</li> <li>○ Review the plan of care so you will know which observations should to be made. For example, blood pressure medications may cause increased risk for falls due to decreased blood pressure when standing up; blood thinners cause an increased risk for bleeding and/or bruising; and narcotics can cause constipation.</li> <li>○ Read the label to know where the medication should be stored. Some medications will need to be refrigerated; others will need to be at room</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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	<p>temperature but always kept away from heat or light. Help your patient know where to store their medications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Check expiration dates on pill bottles. Expired medications should be properly disposed of after checking with the nurse or the family.</li> <li>○ Is access to transportation to the pharmacy or the cost of medications affecting your patient’s ability to follow the physician’s instructions for taking the medications? Your nurse supervisor should be told of such issues and may be able to assist with resolving these issues.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Slide 7</b></p>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be sure to report any issues with the medications – from having trouble swallowing pills to side effects due to a medication, report any concerns to your nurse supervisor.</li> <li>● Watch for changes in patients’ behavior. Never assume that all older patients get confused at times.</li> <li>● Other side effects include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rash, hives</li> <li>○ Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea</li> <li>○ Drowsiness</li> <li>○ Anaphylaxis or a severe and life-threatening allergic reaction. Anaphylaxis happens rapidly. Symptoms may include extreme itching, shortness of breath or stridor, a high-pitched sound while breathing, or a full body reaction which can be life threatening</li> </ul> </li> <li>● If you think your patient is experiencing a severe reaction to a medication, first call 911 and follow their instructions. Afterwards, notify your supervisor. Do not leave your patient until help arrives.</li> <li>● There may be times when you feel your patient is misusing his/her medication. This could be deliberate or accidental. If your patient is taking the wrong dose or at the wrong time, refusing to take medications, drinking alcohol or using drugs while on medications, or taking medications that you know have not been prescribed to that patient, report this information to your supervisor. This could be a sign of either a health issue, a mental health issue, or a behavioral issue that your supervisor will need to deal with.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Slide 8</b></p>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Activity #1 – Can/Cannot</b></li> <li>● Have the students complete the activity in pairs. Come back together as a group and go over answers. Discuss answers with students. Were any of the scenarios</li> </ul>	

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	surprising? What other cans or cannots will students be able to share?	
<b>Slide 9</b>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Activity #2 – Case Scenarios</b></li> <li>• Have the students get into small groups, read the case scenarios, and answer the questions. Come back together as a group and go over answers. Compare the students' answers and thought processes.</li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 10</b>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assisting patients with following their physician's instructions for taking their medications might be one of the most important things you do as a home care aide. Always trust that your supervisor will help you with questions or concerns that you will have regarding medication issues.</li> </ul>	